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Care Facilities Having 6 or Fewer Clients

Classified in the California Building Code as R-3.1 Occupancies

FIRE SAFETY CLEARANCE GUIDELINES

I. DEFINITION

This occupancy group may include facilities licensed by a governmental agency for a residentially based 24-hour care facility providing accommodations for six or fewer clients of any age. Clients may be classified as ambulatory, non-ambulatory, or bedridden.

II. PRE-INSPECTION

Upon request from a prospective licensee of a community care facility, the Fire District will conduct a pre-inspection of a facility prior to the final fire clearance inspection and approval. If you would like a pre-inspection, submit an application to the Fire District at 3012 Gold Canal Drive, Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. A fee of \$50.00 is payable with the application.

III. PLAN

Obtain or create **4** sets of plans (only **2** sets of plans necessary for any facilities located within the city of **Citrus Heights**). They shall be drawn so that, on the plans, **¼ inch is equal to one-foot**. They shall be drawn on no less than **18x24** inch paper. Your plans must be clear and legible and provide the following information:

A. Site/plot plan showing:

1. The facility name and address, number of clients, and their physical status, (ambulatory, non-ambulatory, bedridden).
2. An explanation of the scope of your project. (If there is no construction involved, please indicate on the plans: "Change in use from single family dwelling to a residential care facility.")
3. All structures, property lines, and the public street fronting the property.

4. Location and type of nearest fire hydrant (Indicate distance in feet).
5. Fencing, gates, gate hardware, and walkways. Show walkway from all exit doors, all the way to a safe dispersal area, or the public way. Also indicate walkway width and composition.
6. Any exterior stairs or ramps.

B. Floor plan showing:

1. All new and existing construction (i.e. new bedroom, new bathroom, new hallway, etc.)
2. The size of all new doors, interior and exterior. Indicate whether sliding or swinging doors.
3. Interior stairs, steps, ramps, and any elevation changes in the path of exiting between the bedrooms and the landing outside the exit doors.
4. The use of all rooms, including the location and number of ambulatory vs. non-ambulatory clients, staff, etc.
5. Smoke alarms, fire extinguisher, and automatic fire sprinkler riser locations, when applicable.

IV. SUBMIT PLANS TO THE BUILDING DEPARTMENT

Take four (4) sets of plans to the County of Sacramento Building Department, located at 4101 Branch Center Road, Sacramento. At the Building Department, you will process an application for a building permit for the use of recording by the Sacramento County Planning Dept. and/or any construction planned for your facility. No construction is permitted without the proper building permit. If no construction is planned for your facility, a “no-construction” building permit is still required for the change in use by the Planning Dept.

(CITY OF CITRUS HEIGHTS RESIDENTS, SEE SECTION VI BELOW.)

V. FIRE DISTRICT PLAN SUBMITTAL

Once the Building Department intake process has been completed (Section III above), your plans will be forwarded to the Fire District for review and approval.

The Fire District maintains an office within the Building Department, and you may submit your plans at that same location to the fire district representative. **A plan review fee of \$282.00 will be due at the time of submittal.** The Fire District will then review your plans, and contact you if any corrections are necessary. Once the Fire District approves the plans, they will be given to the Building Department for

review. **The Building Department will contact you when your plans and permit are ready for pick-up.**

NOTE: If applying for a "Change in Ownership" only, a plan submittal will not be required at the building department. However, if fire district records indicate the need for updated facility drawings, 2 sets of plans will be required by this department for review. In this case, plans shall be submitted directly to the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Prevention Bureau, at 3012 Gold Canal Drive, Rancho Cordova.

A Fire Safety Inspection Request for "Change in Ownership" only, requires an inspection of the facility by the Fire District for the new license. A (BDI) building inspection fee of \$282.00 is required prior to requesting the Fire District Inspection.

VI. CITY OF CITRUS HEIGHTS (ONLY) PLAN SUBMITTAL

Take **2** sets of plans to the **Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Prevention Bureau**, located at 3012 Gold Canal Dr., Rancho Cordova. **A plan review fee of \$282.00 will be due at the time of submittal.** At the Fire Department, you will process an application for a Fire Permit for the change in use, and/or any construction planned for your facility.

Once you have completed the Fire Department intake process, they will log your plans in, and route them to the City of Citrus Heights Fire Inspector. The Fire Inspector will review your plans and will contact you if corrections are necessary. Once the Fire Inspector approves the plans, you will be contacted to pick them up.

Construction shall not be conducted without a proper building permit. Please contact the City of Citrus Heights, Building Department for any necessary permits, at 6237 Fountain Square Drive, Citrus Heights, (916) 727-4760, prior to starting work. If no construction is planned for your facility, a building permit is not needed from the City of Citrus Heights.

NOTE: If applying for a "Change in Ownership" only, a plan submittal will not be required at the building department. However, if fire district records indicate the need for updated facility drawings, 2 sets of plans will be required by this department for review. In this case, plans shall be submitted directly to the Sacramento Metropolitan Fire Prevention Bureau, at 3012 Gold Canal Drive, Rancho Cordova.

A Fire Safety Inspection Request for "Change in Ownership" only, requires an inspection of the facility by the Fire District for the new license. A (BDI) building inspection fee of \$282.00 is required prior to requesting the Fire District Inspection.

VII. FACILITY GUIDELINES

A. Building Height and Area Provisions.

Limitations—six or less clients. Group R-3.1 occupancies where clients are housed above the first story, having more than two stories in height or having more than 3,000 square feet (279 m²) of floor area above the first story shall not be of less than 1-hour fire-resistance-rated construction throughout.

In Group R-3.1 occupancies housing a bedridden client, the client sleeping room shall not be located above or below the first story.

EXCEPTION: Clients who become bedridden as a result of a temporary illness as defined in Health and Safety Code Sections 1566.45, 1568.0832, and 1569.72. A temporary illness is an illness that persists for 14 days or less. A bedridden client may be retained in excess of the 14 days upon approval by the Department of Social Services and may continue to be housed on any story in a Group R-3.1 occupancy classified as a licensed residential facility.

Every licensee admitting or retaining a bedridden resident shall, within 48 hours of the resident's admission or retention in the facility, notify the local fire authority with jurisdiction of the estimated length of time the resident will retain his or her bedridden status in the facility.

B. Special Provisions

Restraint shall not be practiced in a residential care home.

C. Exiting

1. Exiting From the House:

Provide a minimum of two (2) exits from the home. A sliding glass door may be used if it is permitted and approved by the building official.

For exterior exit doors, standard door hardware is allowed, but interconnected deadbolt locks, which automatically unlock with the turning of the door handle are highly recommended. If screens are installed on any doors, it is recommended that they be equipped with similar door hardware.

2. Intervening Rooms:

A means of exit shall not pass through more than one intervening room and shall not pass through kitchens, storerooms, closets, garages, or spaces used for similar purposes.

3. Doors:

Where new construction is required, every exit doorway shall be of a size so as to permit the installation of a door not less than 3 feet in width and not less 6 feet 8 inches in height. Exit doors shall be capable of opening at least 90 degrees, and shall be mounted so that the clear width of the exit way is no less than 32 inches.

4. Floor Separations:

Group R-3.1 occupancies shall be provided with a non-fire resistance constructed floor separation at stairs which will prevent smoke migration between floors. Such floor separation shall have equivalent construction of 0.5 inch (12.7 mm) gypsum wallboard on one side of wall framing.

This section does not apply if clients are on the first floor only and it is clearly stated on the Fire Safety Clearance Form that there shall be no clients on floors above the 1st floor.

5. Doors Within Floor Separations:

Doors within such floor separations shall be tight fitting solid wood at least 1 $\frac{3}{8}$ inches (35 mm) in thickness. Door glazing shall not exceed 1,296 square inches (32 918 sq mm) with no dimension greater than 54 inches (1372 mm). Such doors shall automatically close and latch and have smoke gaskets at the top and sides; or can be held open with magnetic holders that are automatic closing by smoke detection.

Exception: 1. Occupancies with at least one exterior exit from floors occupied by clients.
2. Occupancies provided with automatic fire sprinkler system.

6. Changes in Level:

In Group R-3.1 occupancies housing non-ambulatory clients, changes in level up to 0.25 inch (6mm) may be vertical and without edge treatment. Changes in level between 0.25 inch (6 mm) and 0.5 inch (12.7 mm) shall be beveled with a slope no greater than 1 unit vertical in 2 units horizontal (50 percent slope). Changes in level greater than 0.5 inch (12.7 mm) shall be accomplished by means of a ramp.

Note: The "Emergency Pre-Fire Plan" shall clarify how patients including bedridden, non-ambulatory, and walker dependent patients will be exited from the building, all the way to the public way, or designated area.

The path of travel from an exit to the public way (street) shall be by way of a continuous and unobstructed all-weather surface, a minimum of 3 feet in width. All walkways are to be maintained clear and unobstructed at all times. Exterior gates that are in the path of exit travel shall be provided with standard gate hardware. Padlocks not permitted.

7. Facilities Housing Non-ambulatory Clients:

Bedrooms used by non-ambulatory clients shall have access to at least one of the following:

- a. Egress through a corridor/hallway or area into a bedroom in the immediate area, which has an exit directly to the exterior and the corridor/hallway is constructed consistent with the dwelling unit interior walls. The hallway shall be separated from common areas by a solid wood door not less than 1 3/8 inch (35 mm) in thickness, maintained self-closing or shall be automatic closing by actuation of a smoke detector installed in accordance with California Building Code (CBC) Section 715.4.7.
- b. Egress through a hallway which has an exit directly to the exterior. The hallway shall be separated from the rest of the house by a wall constructed consistent with the dwelling unit interior walls and opening protected by a solid wood door not less than 1 3/8 inch (35 mm) in thickness, maintained self-closing or shall be automatic closing by actuation of a smoke detector installed in accordance with CBC Section 715.4.7.
- c. Direct exit from the bedroom to the exterior.
- d. Egress from a bedroom to a bedroom, which exits to the exterior (without going into a hallway or open area).

Note: A hallway door is not required if either c. or d. above is utilized for non-ambulatory exiting.

8. Escape or Rescue Windows:

- a. Escape or rescue windows shall be maintained as required by the Building Code for the year the residence construction was permitted.
- b. Bars, grilles, grates or similar devices may be installed on emergency escape or rescue windows or doors, or on any required exit door provided:
 - 1) The devices are equipped with Fire Department approved release mechanisms that are operable from the inside without the use of a key or any special knowledge or effort.
 - 2) The building is equipped with smoke alarms.

- 3) Such bars, grilles, grates, and similar devices are equipped with a Fire Department approved release device, on the exterior side, for the purpose of Fire District emergency access.

D. Interior Wall and Ceiling Finish

Wall and ceiling finishes shall be no less than Class C.

NOTE: This section will not apply if the interior walls are of wall paint on textured gypsum wallboard.

E. Fire Protection:

1. Fire Extinguishers: Provide one 2A:10B:C fire extinguisher on each floor and in the kitchen area near the path of exit. It shall be hung on the wall so that the top is 3 ½ to 5 feet above the floor. It shall be serviced annually and after each use.
2. Smoke alarms shall be installed and maintained, regardless of the number of occupants, at all of the following locations:
 - a. On the ceiling or wall outside of each separate sleeping area in the immediate vicinity of bedrooms.
 - b. In each room used for sleeping purposes.
 - c. In each story within a dwelling unit, including basements, but not including crawl spaces and uninhabitable attics. In dwellings or dwelling units with split levels and without an intervening door between the adjacent levels, a smoke alarm installed on the upper level shall suffice for the adjacent lower level provided that the lower level is less than one full story below the upper level.
 - d. Smoke alarms shall be provided throughout the habitable areas of the dwelling unit except kitchens.
 - e. Power Source. In new construction, and in existing homes converted to care facilities after January 1, 2008, required smoke alarms shall receive their primary power from the building wiring and shall be equipped with a battery backup. Smoke alarms shall emit a signal when the batteries are low. Wiring shall be permanent and without a disconnecting switch other than as required for over-current protection, (circuit breaker in the electrical panel).

- f. Interconnection. Where more than one smoke alarm is required to be installed within an individual dwelling, the smoke alarms shall be interconnected in such a manner that the activation of one alarm will activate all of the alarms in the individual unit. The alarm shall be clearly audible in all bedrooms over background noise levels with all intervening doors closed.
3. Fire Sprinklers. The installation of an automatic fire sprinkler system is required in facilities housing more than one bedridden client and/or housing non-ambulatory clients above the first floor, or having any clients above the second floor.

F. Fire Safety:

1. Living Area/Garage Separation:
The separation of the garage from the house and attic shall be by means of a minimum one-half-inch gypsum board applied on the garage side or as per the adopted edition of the Building Code in the year the building was constructed. The door from the garage to the house shall be self-closing, and positive latching. It shall also be made of 1 3/8 inch solid wood, or have a fire-protection rating of not less than 20 minutes. CBC 406.1.4
2. Draperies, Curtains, and Decorative Materials:
With the exception of individual sleeping rooms, all drapes, curtains, hangings, drops, and all other decorative materials, including Christmas trees, shall be made from a non-flammable material or shall be treated and maintained in a flame retardant condition. Exit doors shall not be concealed or obstructed by decorative materials.
3. Extension Cords:
Extension cords shall not be used as a substitute for permanent wiring. Extension cords shall not be attached to the structure, extend through walls, ceilings, or floors; run under doors or floor covering, or be subject to environmental or physical damage. Extension cords shall only be used with portable appliances while in immediate use.
4. Housekeeping:
All portions of residential care facilities shall be maintained in a neat and orderly manner, free from anything that would create a fire or life hazard, or a condition, which would add or contribute to the rapid spread of fire. This includes the proper storage of combustible material and flammable or combustible liquids, the proper storage and disposal of waste material and rubbish, and the removal of any dry vegetation from within thirty (30) feet of the facility. Good housekeeping shall be practiced and observed at all times.

5. Open Flame Devices:
Open flame devices (candles, oil lamps, and similar items) shall not be used in residential care facilities.
6. Smoking Prohibited:
Smoking is prohibited in any patient room utilizing oxygen or air induced mattresses.
7. Emergency Pre-fire Planning:
Provide a staff-training program, insuring that all staff members are trained in the use of all fire extinguishers and methods of conducting evacuations, including the use of any equipment required to move patients.

G. Exterior:

1. Premises Identification (Address):
Address numbers shall be mounted in a way so that they are plainly visible from the street or road fronting the property. Numbers shall be illuminated at night, at least 6-inches tall, and have a contrasting background.

The 6-inch tall requirement is a minimum, if the numbers are not visible from the street, they will need to be larger and/or a sign post with the house numbers shall be posted at the public street.

2. Access Roadways:
All portions of the facility shall be located within 150 feet of an approved fire apparatus access roadway. All homes which cannot comply with this 150 foot requirement shall be provided with a 20 foot wide fire apparatus access lane, including an approved fire apparatus turn-around. (Please contact Metro Fire District for fire lane and apparatus turn-around specifications.)
3. Vehicle Gates & Barriers:
Please contact Metro Fire District **prior** to the installation of any vehicle gates or barriers for minimum gate requirements, a Knox lock application, and to obtain a required gate permit. A man gate, with approved hardware, is to be located within 10 feet of a vehicle gate. The addition of fencing and gates that obstruct emergency access to a facility, without a Fire District permit, voids the Fire Safety Clearance for that facility.
4. Spark Arrester for Chimney:
All chimneys shall be equipped with an approved spark arrester. Branches of trees and large shrubs are to be maintained a minimum of 10 feet away from a chimney.

H. Facilities Without Fire Sprinklers, Housing a Bedridden Client:

All of the following shall be provided in new and existing facilities:

1. Meet all of the requirements for a new non-ambulatory facility. SFM Interpretation 08-060

The following are from California Building Code, Section 425.8.3.3:

2. A direct exit to the exterior of the residence shall be provided from the client sleeping room.
3. Interior doors to a bedridden client's sleeping room shall be self-releasing, positive latching, 1 3/8 inch (35 mm), and be of solid wood. Such doors shall be provided with a gasket so installed as to provide a seal where the door meets the jam on both sides and across the top. Doors shall be maintained self-closing or shall be automatic closing by actuation of a smoke alarm in accordance with CBC Section 715.4.7.
4. Facilities shall not have a night latch, dead bolt, security chain, or any similar locking device installed on any interior door leading from a bedridden client's sleeping room to any interior area such as a hallway or general use area of the residence.
5. Every required exit doorway from a bedridden client's sleeping room shall be of a size as to permit the installation of a door not less than 3 feet in width and not less than 6 feet 8 inches in height. When installed in exit doorways, exit doors shall be capable of opening at least 90 degrees and shall be so mounted that the clear width of the exit way is not less than 32 inches.
6. The exterior exit door to a bedridden client's sleeping room shall be operable from both the interior and exterior of the residence. This includes the ability of the caregiver to unlock the door from the exterior, and includes sliding glass doors. If hardware is added to a sliding glass door in order for it to be unlocked with a key from the outside, the sliding glass door will not be permitted unless the finished opening is at least 32 inches in clear width.

I. Facilities Having More Than One Bedridden Client

1. Fire sprinklers are required per CBC 903.3.
2. Must meet the requirements for a non-ambulatory facility.